

REMARKS

The present amendment revises independent claim 1 to further distinguish the invention, as will be discussed in more detail below.

The present amendment also revises all the claims to improve their form under US-claim drafting practice. Claim 8 is among the claims that have been revised, and it is respectfully submitted that claim 8 is now suitably definite under the second paragraph of 35 USC 112. Accordingly, the rejection of claim 8 for indefiniteness should be withdrawn.

The present amendment also adds three new dependent claims, 10-12, to further protect the invention.

The present application is directed to a device that supplies objects to principals, particularly over a network. An important feature of this device will be summarized with reference to Figures 6 and 7 of the application's drawings. Figure 6 illustrates an example of information stored in a principal information managerial interfacing section 23 (see Figure 1), and Figure 7 illustrates an example of information stored in an object information managerial section 25 (see Figure 1).

As will be seen from Figure 6, a principal ID such as "Sakurai 123" can be used to retrieve a principal information key and a principal information value ({1970/1/1,

“man”} in this example) from the section 23. Here, “1970/1/1” represents the user’s birthday, and “man” is the user’s sex. This information retrieved from the section 23 on the basis of the principal ID can then be used, with the information in the section 25 (Figure 7), to identify an object. This involves the uses of a rule, in this case a rule transforming the user’s birthday into the user’s current age. As will be seen from Figure 8, a “principal information value template” of {“30”, “man”} is associated with an object A. In the year 2002, when the present application was originally filed in Japan, a person born in 1970 would have been 30 years old (for part of the year). Thus, the principal information value retrieved from the arrangement shown in Figure 6 ({1970/1/1, “man”}) can be used with the principal information value template shown in Figure 7 to identify the object A.

A considerable advantage of applicant’s multi-step technique for identifying objects is that a new principal can be added or an old one can be deleted merely by modifying the contents of the section 23 (Figure 6), without any modifications being needed in section 25 (Figure 7) regarding the objects themselves. Similarly, an object can be added or deleted merely by modifying section 25 (Figure 7), without any changes in section 23 (Figure 6) being necessary.

The Office Action rejects independent claim 1 (and several dependent claims) for anticipation by US patent 5,235,642 to Wobber et al (hereafter simply “Wobber”).

Claim 1 recites a “principal information storing section” and an “object information storing section.” Furthermore, claim 1 has been amended to recite “an application section to retrieve a plurality of pieces of information stored in said principal information storing section in response to principal ID information supplied by one of said principals, and to use the pieces of information retrieved from the principal information storing section along with information stored in said object information storing section to identify an object corresponding to said one of said principals.” For the reasons discussed below, it is respectfully submitted that the invention now defined by claim 1 is neither disclosed nor suggested by Wobber.

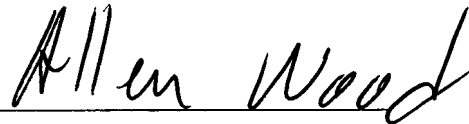
The Wobber reference is directed to an access control arrangement which requires authentication of requests received from principals. The Office Action refers to a passage bridging Wobber’s columns 1 and 2 with respect to the previous formulation of the “application section” of claim 1. However, this passage does not disclose retrieving information stored in one section in response to principal ID information supplied by a principal, and then using this retrieved information along with information stored in another section to identify an object corresponding to the principal, in accordance with

the current formulation of claim 1. Nor would anything in the reference have suggested this to an ordinarily skilled person.

Since the remaining claims depend from claim 1 and recite additional limitations to further define the invention, they are patentable along with claim 1 and need not be further discussed.

For the foregoing reasons it is respectfully submitted that this application is now in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the application is therefore respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Allen Wood". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Allen Wood

Reg. No. 28,134

RABIN & BERDO, P.C.

Customer No. 23995

Telephone: (202) 326-0222

Facsimile: (202) 408-0924

AW:dj/rw